

IN THE CLAIMS:

24. (Amended) A smelting reduction method comprising:

A<sup>2</sup>  
B  
C (a) charging a carbonaceous material and an ore into a reacting furnace to directly contact the carbonaceous material and the ore;

(b) reducing the ore until at least a part of the ore is metallized, the resultant ore containing at least a part of the metallized metal being produced;

(c) charging the carbonaceous material and the ore containing at least a part of the metallized metal from step (b) into a smelting furnace having a metal bath; and

(d) blowing a gas containing 20% or more of oxygen into the metal bath in the smelting furnace to produce molten iron.

25. (Amended) The method of claim 24, further comprising charging carbonaceous material and pre-reduced ore into the metal bath of the smelting furnace.

26. (Amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the carbonaceous material charged into the reacting furnace is in an amount which is stoichiometrically sufficient for reducing and metallizing all of the ore charged into the reacting furnace.

27. (Amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the reacting furnace is a rotary kiln furnace or a rotary hearth furnace.

Please cancel claims 1 to 23 and 28 to 37, without prejudice.

Please add the following claims:

A3  
38. [New] The method of claim 25, wherein the carbonaceous material charged into the smelting furnace is in an amount which is stoichiometrically sufficient for reducing and metallizing all of the ore charged into the smelting furnace.

39. [New] The method of claim 38, wherein the reacting furnace is a rotary kiln furnace.

40. [New] The method of claim 38, wherein the reacting furnace is a rotary hearth furnace.

41. [New] The method of claim 24, wherein the carbonaceous material comprises char generated by devolatilizing coal.

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Replace the ABSTRACT with the ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE submitted concomitantly herewith.